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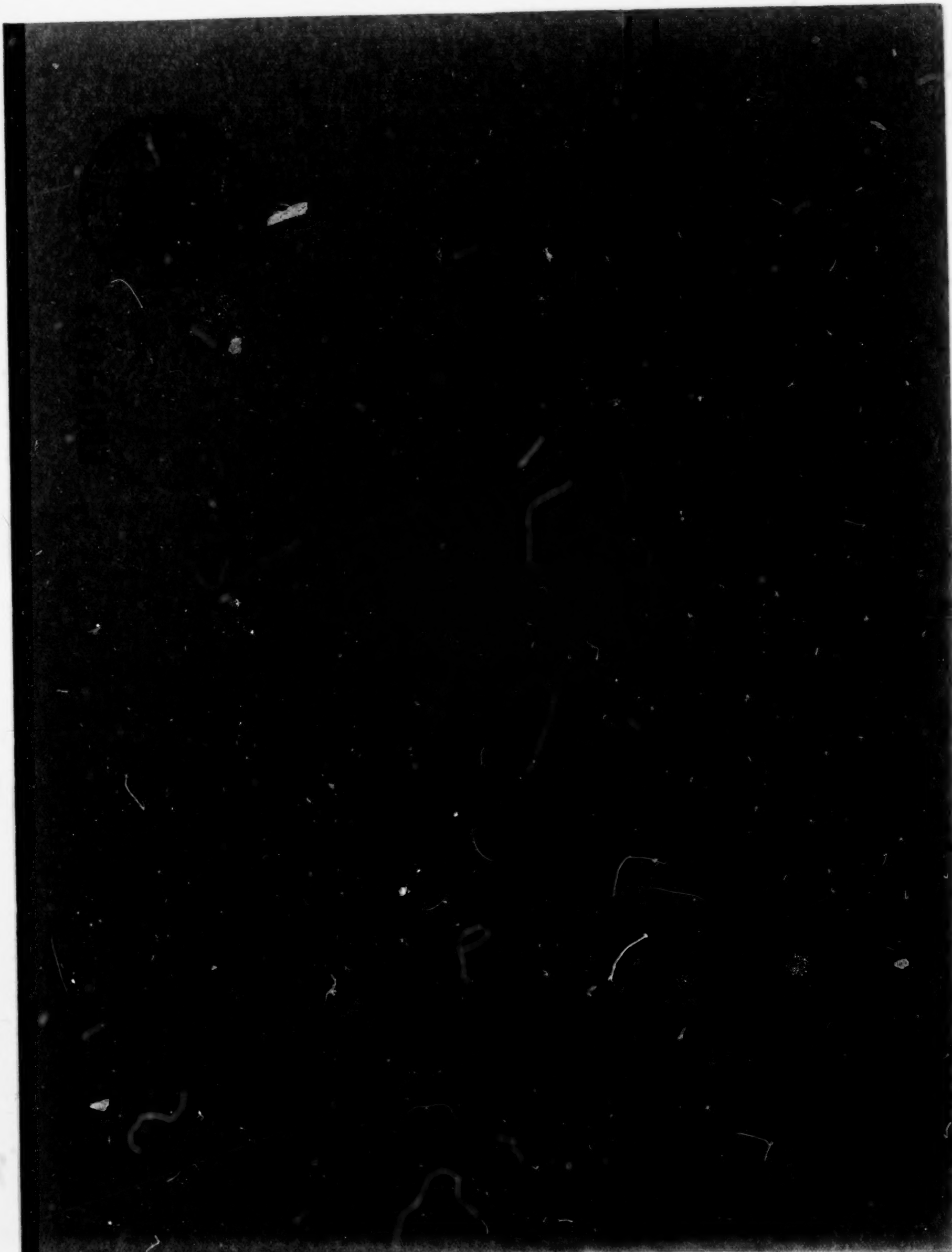
ABSTRACT

The addresses and discussions of the 1970 Maryland Reading Institute focused on the theme of "accountability"--defined as the responsibilities of teachers to their students, community, and society. In Part 1, highlights of the keynote address are followed by summaries of a five-member panel discussion, five reactors' statements, and a concluding address. Reading educators were seen as responsiblie for providing a solid basis for all education. In addition, because of the wealth of recent research on the reading process and the learning-to-read process, the teacher of reading has the responsibility to learn as much as possible in her field and apply her knowledge in the classroom. On another level, programs in colleges and universities must supply future teachers with training in teaching reading skills and in the development of effective reading curricula. The second part of this volume includes an address by Kenneth Goodman entitled "Psycho-linguistics and Reading" and summaries of speeches on reading and learning centers, teaching values in elementary social studies programs, and our responsibility to children. (AL)



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ACCOUNTABILITY:

TO WHOM? FOR WHAT?

Proceedings of the

1970 Maryland Reading Institute

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

In previous years, the Maryland Reading Institute was generally devoted to the presentation of position papers followed by discussions. This year's Institute was designed for more group interaction and expression of views by the participants. For the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Maryland Reading Institute, a current controversial issue among educators was chosen as the theme --- Accountability: To Whom? For What? This theme was introduced at the opening session by the keynote speaker, Rhody McCoy, former director of the Ocean-Hill Brownsville School District in New York City, and followed by small group discussions. A panel of educators dealt with specific questions: For what are we now accountable in reading? For what can we be accountable in reading? and For what should we be accountable in reading? After group discussions of this phase of the program, a reaction panel expressed the aggregate views of all participants. In addition to the sessions specifically dealing with accountability, a variety of program topics were featured as interest group

meetings and a general session on psycholinguistics with Dr. Kenneth Goodman of Wayne State University provided relevant and current scope for the Institute.

This volume contains two sections arranged according to the general framework of the Institute. The first section contains highlights of the provocative main address presented by Rhody McCoy followed by a summary of the group discussions. Positions on accountability as viewed from several vantage points and viewpoints of specific groups of educators (classroom teachers, resource teachers, administrators and supervisors, college and university teachers, and the State Department officials) are included. The final address presented to the Institute by Richard Petre, Maryland State Department of Education, is included in this section.

Section Two is devoted to the content of the interest groups - the general session address given by Kenneth S. Goodman and notes from his talk-with session; and the summaries of presentations given in small group sessions. Because the interest group leaders utilized strategies to suit the nature of the topic, the papers in this section reflect the manner of the individual presentations.

Though this volume is somewhat thinner than previous volumes of the Maryland Reading Institute proceedings, it is hoped that the ideas and views presented will prove equally as exciting and challenging not only to those persons concerned with the teaching of reading but to all persons interested in improving the quality of instruction in today's schools.

M.C.J.
M.B.K.
J.D.C.

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PART ONE

ACCOUNTABILITY: TO WHOM? FOR WHAT?

Highlights of Keynote Address by Rhody McCoy

Summary of Reaction Sessions

Positions on Accountability in Reading--Panel of State Educators

Reactions to Panel

Address: "Get Behind Accountability But Push"--Richard Petre

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE of this volume is devoted to the issue of accountability in reading -- its focus and scope. The concern is not with providing the reader with verbatim reporting of the sessions of the Institute, but with providing the main ideas imparted by the keynote speaker, the panel of educators, and the discussion groups which followed each. Only the final address is included in its entirety as a means of summarizing many of the ideas expressed throughout the Institute and as a means of "leading" the reader into the application of the content in PART TWO.

HIGHLIGHTS OF KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Rhody McCoy, Former Director
Ocean-Hill Brownsville School District
New York City

"Education in this country is not a priority; it hasn't been for quite a few years; and the prognosis is that it won't be for a few years longer," proclaimed Rhody McCoy. He expressed the belief that education now, as in the past, is couched in frauds, myths, and illusions. McCoy went on to examine some of these such as the fraud practiced on minorities concealing the deliberate strategy to keep them uneducated, the myth that minority group citizens are finally being placed in decision-making positions in education, and the illusion that the standardized tests are a fair assessment of a child's ability.

McCoy further asserted that people are finally recognizing the educational sham and are holding educators accountable for what is happening to children in schools in this country. Educators themselves talk about accountability, but do not really intend to be accountable to anyone other than their administrative superiors. They close the doors of their schools with no intention of accounting to the community for what goes on behind those closed doors. In many schools, especially in the inner city, teachers have no intention of

trying to teach children, and the school systems themselves shield teachers from the community. As long as they remain accountable to no one but themselves, school systems will continue to provide a refuge for the incompetent teacher to hide.

Standardized testing was cited by McCoy as the only kind of accountability that many teachers accept. They, in fact, use the results of culture-biased standardized tests to document the failure of minority children and to give themselves an excuse not to teach such "culturally deprived" children. Better and fairer tests can, and have been, developed by individual schools to assess the goals that they wish to measure. With the help of trained paraprofessionals these tests can be administered to children individually rather than in a group. Yet many schools are afraid or unwilling to use parents as paraprofessionals. However, the time is fast approaching when schools will have to allow people in the community to become involved in the education of their own children.

Finally, McCoy noted that the nation, too, must be held accountable because for many children educational programs are not going to work while problems like housing, hunger, and unemployment remain unsolved. Until this happens, curriculum change and innovation are a waste of time.

Despite the need for society and parents to be held partially accountable in education, we as teachers remain most clearly responsible for the direction of education, and "if we continue the way we are going, the largest group of unemployed people in this country is going to be the professional teachers."

SUMMARY OF REACTION SESSIONS

In the small group discussions, reaction to the keynote address were channeled in three main areas. The first of these areas concerned the application of the term "accountability." While groups agreed that teachers are first accountable to the child, views differed on the extent of the teacher's accountability to parents and the community. There was dissent on the degree to which teachers should consider themselves accountable for helping to correct the social problems of the nation. Several groups suggested that teachers are a potentially viable political force that could affect social change so that education can take place.

The question of the type and extent of parental involvement in the educational system itself provided another pivotal area of discussion. A wide disparity of opinion was evident on this topic, ranging from outright rejection of parental involvement as a sign of abdication of the teacher's role to a concern of how to get more parents to volunteer as paraprofessionals. Those who anticipated the infeasibility

of recruiting parents from the community as volunteers discussed the problems involved; those who opposed parental involvement raised questions such as the weight of parental evaluation versus professional evaluation of students as well as the dangers of untrained volunteers in instructional positions.

Finally, there was general agreement that standardized tests are misused by the school to lock children into certain ability level molds from which they can seldom escape. Such tests are often unrelated to the material being taught in the classroom. Yet most participants in the discussion groups expressed the need for some type of evaluative instrument. Interest was expressed in the test instrument which the keynote speaker said was developed, and some of the participants felt that this type of test, if developed by the teachers in each school system, might be effective. Such tests would reflect the goals of that system and would be an alternative to nationwide standardized testing.

POSITIONS ON ACCOUNTABILITY IN READING

Paul R. Daniels
Division of Instructional Services
Prince George's County

Accountability -- Is it that awful thing that most educators seem to fear and despise? Is it necessary? It is believed that accountability has been needed for a long time. However, it seems to be directed at this time toward the elementary schools and reading instruction specifically. This is wrong. All levels of education from kindergarten through the university should be accountable.

For too long, lack of initiative, concern and competency have been accepted because of many reasons. The number of children deprived of possible opportunities to approach their learning potential number in tens of thousands. Because of these factors, a governmental and public reaction, possibly an over-reaction, has developed. Therefore, it is mandatory for educators to accept the fact and justice of accountability and direct it toward the group it should help -- the children.

Accountability based on standardized test results is a statistical farce -- a way to force education back to a new dark age where thinking and reasoning go unrewarded. The limited value of standardized testing is common knowledge among informed educators.

Diagnostic tests and, above all, surveys offer the best approaches to accountability. These tools offer us a valid measure of a child's acquisitions rather than his standing in a group. They would also provide teachers with a set of needs upon which to base their instructional programs and would permit an accurate evaluation of the needs of a group and the degree to which these needs were met.

Accountability could be an honest procedure if it provided for children's growth and fostered more systematic instruction from teachers. Accountability is dishonest when its use is political, when it tries to justify unscientific ideas, and when it is used to create hostility toward the educators of the country.

Miss Julia E. Hamblet
Associate Director
Right-to-Read Program
U. S. Office of Education

1. WHAT ARE WE PRESENTLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR IN READING?

Because we have thousands of dedicated teachers who hold themselves responsible to teach their students as much as possible,

approximately 85% of the children learn to read. However, in a system that emphasizes "teaching" rather than "learning," in a system in which the basis for both hiring and advancement is "number of academic credits" rather than "performance and competency," and in a system in which the measure of student performance is "norm-referenced" rather than "criterion-referenced," accountability is a foreign concept.

2. WHAT <u>CAN</u> WE BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR IN READING?

We can be held responsible for finding out what we do know about the reading process and then using this knowledge effectively. On the basis of existing knowledge we can be held accountable for establishing clear reading instructional objectives, for specifying reading behavioral outcomes to describe achievement of those objectives, for effective use of existing tools and resources for achieving desired pupil reading performance, and for measuring student progress in reading in terms of stated behavioral objectives.

3. WHAT <u>SHOULD</u> WE BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR IN READING?

We should be held accountable for assuring that no child shall leave our schools without the skill and the desire necessary to read to the full limits of his capability. We -- society as a whole, not just the teacher or the school system --

should be held responsible that the knowledge and the resources are available to make attainment of the Right to Read goal possible. With adequate research-based knowledge about the reading process, the learning-to-read process and language development, and with adequate resources to make full and effective utilization of this knowledge, we should be held accountable that every American attain adequate reading competence.

Oscar C. Jensen
Associate for Higher Education
Maryland State Teachers Association

The three questions raised on accountability in reading instruction all revolve around the two aspects of teacher training and teaching practices. On the assumption that quality and practical universal education is a continuing goal of our society and that the path to this goal involves reading in every classroom situation, then we as educators must recognize that teacher training must involve training in reading skills applicable to the academic area for which the candidate is being prepared.

In teaching practices the availability of appropriate supplies and materials of instruction as well as a suitable physical environment are important. The creation of a curriculum and the ability to use the curriculum which recognizes the reading process is of essential value for the development of reading skills in any academic area.

It is believed that we interpret our role at the present time as being accountable for the teaching of words and the thoughts represented by these words. We must accept this accountability as a prime factor, but we should go further in recognizing the types of reading skills inherent in the various academic fields and develop means to relate our prime goal to these reading skills.

Theophil K. Muellen
Assistant State Superintendent
of Instruction

As educators we have dodged the risks inherent in being held accountable for areas of our accepted responsibility. If the pupil reads, it is because of our teaching; if he fails, it is his problem. We have not accepted accountability for the pupil's failure to read.

We <u>can</u> be accountable for those school factors which contribute to learning to read; curriculum, administrative policies, differentiated staffing, appraisal of an individual's progress and needs, predicting individual outcomes, using each pupil's natural learning modality.

We <u>should</u> be held accountable to the consumer whether the pupil can or cannot read and communicate. The central office is a service organization, effective only if it delivers

services. It should be accountable for providing adequate personnel, materials, facilities, staff development, and pupil and program appraisal. The staff of each school should be accountable for each student's achievement in reading.

School systems are writing performance contracts with private companies. Should not each school also become the prime grantee for a performance contract with similar professional latitudes and systems of reimbursement for pupil achievement?

Robert G. Risinger, Head
Department of Secondary Education
University of Maryland

Good schools have always assumed that they were responsible for providing the kinds of educational experience which would result in desirable learning on the part of students. The recent attention to the accountability in this respect is not new. In the past, the principal of a school soon became aware of the ineffectual faculty members. The ineffective teachers were given help when possible or discouraged from remaining in the classroom. Most of us will admit that often not enough help was given, but we have been aware of the problem.

While it is agreed that ultimately the profession must be held accountable to the public, under our present system to hold individual teachers accountable is grossly unfair. The classroom teacher is at the mercy of factors

influencing learning over which he has no control. The attempt today in some quarters to tie responsibility to test results puts more faith in standardized tests than is warranted. To be held accountable, the performance of teachers must be judged giving due weight to the many other variables operating in the classroom which influence learning.

For the profession as a whole to be held accountable for learning requires that the profession have some form of self-governance. We seem to be moving in that direction with the acceptance of the right of teachers to bargain collectively, with the establishment of boards of professional standards, and similar developments. As we become more professional, we will insist that, if a teacher is to be held accountable for the reading progress of his students, he will be provided the necessary training and the necessary human and material resources to make this possible.

REACTIONS TO PANEL ON ACCOUNTABILITY

The purpose of this session was to summarize some of the reactions and some of the concerns of each of the special groups represented at the institute. No hard and fast conclusions nor recommendations were sought; this session was to provide opportunity for more questions and open-ended observations. Some of the significant issues, some of the points of agreement and disagreement, or some of the questions that the various groups came up with are presented in this section.

Classroom Teachers - Myrtle Fentress
Prince George County

The group of classroom teachers felt that the Panel had given them much food for thought. There were no serious disagreements and consensus was reached on several items:

1. The total school should be involved in accountability.
2. Goal development should include goals developed for and by the total school.
3. Subjective evaluation should be included in evaluating outcomes.
4. The development of a child's self-concept should be given consideration in reading instruction.
5. Teachers of reading often have the responsibility of motivating the learner for development in other areas.
6. Teachers should get rid of the ideas and practices that have not been successful.
7. There are problems in measuring progress on all grade levels.

A point of disagreement was on the whole issue of measurement. How does one measure goals objectively? Can we use subjective measurement? The point was made that since we live in a society that is very much subjective, it should be respectable to talk about subjective measurement for children's progress.

Resource Teachers - Orlan Cowan, Baltimore County and
Marjorie Stoker, Montgomery County

The resource teachers had a range of duties which included helping to plan over-all programs for schools, supervision, evaluation, and training aides in the schools; some worked with children; some worked with children and teachers; and some worked with teachers exclusively.

It was the consensus of the two groups of resource teachers that they were accountable to the classroom teachers to the extent that the teachers are familiar with a wide variety of materials and devices for meeting the needs of the children. Other points agreed upon by the groups were:

1. Resource teachers should help classroom teachers with administration and interpretation of diagnostic and evaluative measures.

2. Resource teachers should provide teachers with information about application of research to the teaching of reading.

3. Resource teachers should be held accountable personally for their own professional background and development.

4. Resource teachers should feel a responsibility toward the good student as well as the student who is having difficulty.

5. Resource teachers have a role in public relations -- helping familiarize the community with what the schools are doing and how they are going about it.

6. Resource teachers should help teachers to be selective in the use of commercially prepared materials and adapt these to meet the needs of the children.

Questions raised by the groups were concerned with: Is the resource teacher accountable for teaching reading in the content areas? Who should be accountable under a highly structured curriculum planned by the central offices and supervisors?

Administrators and Supervisors - Virginia Moore
Anne Arundel County

Administrators and supervisors focused on the various ramifications of the topic of accountability. Major types of accountability discussed were:

1. Accountability to the child: The child is the main focus of education, but there are many myths which educators implicitly accept about children: drop-outs are inferior; report cards are an accurate assessment of the child's progress; standardized test scores accurately measure a child's potential and progress. Are teachers accountable to children for the perpetuation of these myths?

2. Child's accountability: Should accountability be a shared responsibility with the child in the classroom? The group felt that the child ought to be accountable to some degree. He should analyze himself in terms of where he is in his reading development and be aware of what skills he has acquired.

3. Accountability to parents: We should share accountability with parents; parents should be involved in the learning contract.

4. Accountability of supervisors and administrators: Administrators and supervisors should be more accountable for differentiation in staffing. That is, administrators are aware of the latitude and limitations in granting such differential requests for schools. Perhaps, administrators and supervisors are also accountable for continuing in-service education. Such in-service may be a way of helping teachers use the materials of instruction available to them in creative and flexible ways, and, thus, they may individualize their teaching.

5. The group agreed that educators should be clearer about those things for which they can really be held accountable, and they must work to insure that accountability does not evolve into a term with negative connotations where the only assessment educators show a community is the standardized test results.

College and University - Dorothy D. Sullivan
University of Maryland

A positive approach was taken in terms of what is being done. The question arose as to what can be done to improve the product for which we can be accountable. The point was brought out that perhaps it might be a good idea for educators to direct themselves to professional development instead of referring to teacher training or teacher education. When talk is about teacher education or teacher training, invariably one thinks about the college or university or pre-service aspect of teaching and preparing teachers to become finished products. Professional development would include the continuing in-service of the teacher to help that teacher grow and develop.

What can we do? Are college and university personnel responsible basically for the in-service program? One of the participants mentioned that three years ago, representatives from the reading faculties of the teacher education institutions got together with the personnel from the public schools and met a number of times to establish strategies to move a teacher into the profession and help that teacher in his professional development.

At this point, a Resolution was presented:

That the State Superintendent of Schools form a committee of

1. representatives of all teacher education institutions in our state, and
2. representatives from our public schools

and call meetings to:

a. establish professional development responsibilities in reading, addressing themselves to what teacher-education institutions can do and what schools can do

b. develop guidelines or regulations for colleges and universities to use when working with schools in professional development.

Some of the things that can be done immediately within Maryland's teacher-education institutions were discussed by the group and several points were made:

1. Improve admissions procedures through the use of objective data and subjective data.

2. Improve counselling techniques for preventing entrance to the field those persons who have characteristics not suited for teaching.

3. Improve training by earlier exposure to the school environment.

4. Establish competencies for undergraduates working with children during their methods courses.

5. Strengthen the school systems' evaluation of students during their practical experiences.

State Department of Education - Percy Williams, Director
Division of Compensatory, Urban, and Supplementary Programs

None of us is so naive as to believe that we are not now held accountable for anything. We are accountable whether we care to accept it or not. The County Commissioners hold us accountable; Congress does; parents do; and our children and youth hold us accountable, far more than we dare admit. We can no longer then, talk about providing opportunities for certain things to happen for youth and children, and then very easily wash our hands and say our job is finished. We ARE being held accountable for what happens in our schools.

The State Department group cited the idea of approval of programs in college as a system by which schools would be held accountable. The program can be very good as written on paper, but this is no assurance that the teachers produced will possess the important necessary qualities for accountability. School programs should be closely scrutinized. We should eliminate the scapegoat phrases such as "We don't have

specific goals;" "We haven't done enough in terms of behavioral goals;" "Standardized tests don't tell the whole story;" etc. These are not justifiable reasons for us to say that we cannot be, that we ought not be, or that we will not be accountable. Whether or not we have measures to do the things which are needed or required, we are being held accountable, and it is time for us to make certain that we get the measures that are necessary.

The group also discussed the idea of being accountable for continuing assessment of the education of children as they move through school -- the idea of sharing in a positive, preventive reading program rather than a clinical and negative one, which too many of our reading programs are.

The State Department recognizes that accountability is not just a problem for people at the college level nor people who are working in the local school systems, but that the Department, too, shares in the responsibility for improving education and making sure that certain things are done for greater accountability.

Discussion

There was some discussion regarding seminars for Master's students so that they can meet with those students who are further along in the program and get a realistic viewpoint of what one does as a reading teacher or a reading resource

teacher in the field. Master's students are also alerted to clinical procedures and strategies so that there is more of an awareness of the whole field. Thus, if they don't want to pursue teaching, they can change fields.

A representative from Kent County commented on the report from the administrators and supervisors by stating that the group had placed the teacher in a front-line position as one of the persons most important and that through in-service programs, through observations, etc., support should be given to them. A hierarchy had been established in the group meeting for who was accountable for what.

The discussion closed with a quotation from the Washington, D. C. newspapers in regard to accountability now going on in the District: "Education is the only industry in the history of free enterprise which holds the consumer, that is, the child, responsible for the quality of the product."

GET BEHIND ACCOUNTABILITY BUT PUSH

Richard M. Petre, Consultant in Reading
Maryland State Department of Education

My favorite small boy story is about the little boy who stole cookies from the cookie jar on the pantry shelf. His mother taught him how to overcome this tendency by suggesting that every time he got the urge for a cookie he should say, "No, get behind me, Satan!" Although the lesson was well learned, the urge quickly returned and the boy headed for the pantry only to find the jar on the top shelf. He sized up the situation, started his climb, but remembered his mother's teaching. So, he said, "Get behind me Satan, but push!"

Now that we have explored various ideas about accountability, I wish to suggest some practical ways we could get behind reading accountability in Maryland, but push.

The derivation of the word "accountability" is intriguing. Coming from the French, its meaning has changed through time so that synonyms such as counting, enumerating, or computing are listed as archaic. Mr. Webster presently lists five basic meanings in order to construct a concept of accountability. All of the meanings and their order of priority are timely.

The first priority definition constructs the idea that a part of accountability is to assign. To the educator in reading, this idea suggests the question, "Who is responsible for the Reading Program?" In student language, the question becomes, "Who is doing this to us?"

Accountability appears to demand the designation of specific responsibility. Each school unit must decide who is responsible for the reading program. The old educational football game of "guess who" appears ended. Do we designate only the teachers, the supervisor, the director of instruction, an assistant superintendent, or a team of these people? Should we exclude the superintendent and members of the board of education? Just in case the reading program gets into trouble, should we include the community and the teacher training institutions? My concern in this area of designation is twofold. First, have we identified someone or a group to make decisions about the reading program? Second, once people are assigned, are they the scholars most knowledgeable about the reading process available in the school unit?

Mr. Webster's second definition states that a part of accountability is to deem as to value, think, or judge. The educator in reading must ask, "What should be deemed of value in the reading process?" In student language, the question simply is, "Do they know what they are doing to us?"

Ignoring or refusing to answer this question, I believe, is the center of today's reading controversy. Certainly, opinions do differ about the reading process. New research findings are constantly adding new dimension to the reading process. Yet, the heart of any sound reading program rests upon a school unit seriously answering such fundamental questions as the following: (1) Is reading a subject, a set of skills, or a process? (2) Is the reading act developmental and continuous in nature? (3) Does reading rightfully belong in a language arts continuum? (4) How interrelated and interdependent is reading with the other communicative processes? (5) Is reading achievement related to the learning theories such as S-R or cognitive processes? (6) Is reading related to the sequential findings of human growth and development? Reading accountability holds us responsible to deem our thoughts, judgments, values, and opinions on these questions in order to form a basic philosophy about the reading process.

The third priority definition states that a part of accountability is <u>to render</u>. "What is the reading curriculum?" is the educator's question. The students ask, "What are they doing to us?"

To answer such questions, it appears we must re-examine our reading curriculum. Perhaps our evaluation should answer questions such as: (1) Does our reading curriculum reflect and implement the reading philosophy adopted by the school unit or is it a smorgasbord (which means a little bit of everything and not much of anything or whatever is new)?

(2) Does our reading curriculum rely on grade placement (number of years in school) and isolated skill sheets or eclectic learning strategies which consider various modes of learning? (3) Does our reading curriculum accept and expect individual differences based upon each learner's perceptual and sensory processes; psychological, sociological and psychological factors; and motivation and interest in the reading process? Or does it expect similar round bodies with equal heights, equal weight, and all scoring 6.8 grade level because each student has been bodily present six years and eight months in school? (4) Is the reading curriculum in print and strategically placed in the appropriate offices for the most effective public relations benefit as well as religiously assigned and collected each school year from teachers' desk drawers, or is it accepted by both the teachers and the students as an action-classroom-reading curriculum which is in use daily as the framework for many teaching-learning situations?

The fourth priority definition of accountability constructs the idea of <u>answering in judgment</u>. The basic question for the teacher is, "Have I taught?" For the students, they ask, "Did I learn the right things?"

Although answering in judgment is listed as the fourth priority definition, this definition appears to be most often used in education. My action research of the last three weeks confirms this opinion. With an "N" of 26, the most common definition educators have given for accountability is

"evidence that children can." May I suggest that evaluation is a part of accountability, but the two words are not synonymous.

Too often reading evaluation means use of standardized tests. I do not want to list the pros and cons of such tests today. Instead, I wish to mention several other reading rights for which we must be answerable in judgment. In fact, I would make these prerequisites to looking at any results from standardized reading tests.

(1) In judgment, is each pupil, when asked to use printed materials, at his correct instructional reading level in every subject area?

(2) In judgment, do we have materials available within our schools so each pupil may be at his instructional level?

(3) In judgment, do we have teachers committed to child-centered reading classes? Dr. James Latham in his unpublished dissertation at the University of Maryland found that science labs equipped with our money through federal science projects do not necessarily make science courses any more lab orientated! Is the same true with all the hardware, software, and materials we have spent in language arts?

(4) In judgment, do all Maryland students have 45 minutes of uninterrupted time to read during reading class time? Studies show that almost half of the school day in the United States is spent in "reading instruction." Are we teachers so busy in trivia and rituals, supposing to cast out the blessings of reading, that we exclude the most important ingredients in the reading process -- READING?

(5) In judgment, are our students clued into the processes or strategies we are teaching them? The saddest experience is to see a group of children who not only cannot comprehend or attack words but also who have no idea how to go about the task at hand?

The fifth definition develops the idea that accountability involves <u>being responsible for</u>. To the educator in reading, the question is, "Does the means justify the end?" While in student terms, they are asking, "Don't they know we are humans, too?"

At first, I felt this idea should be the definition with highest priority since humanization of learning is a top requirement in the reading process. Gerzon (Harvard 1970) in his book, <u>The Whole World Is Watching</u>, laments so pointedly that schools have overemphasized IQ at the expense of personality, and technical skills at the expense of human relationships.

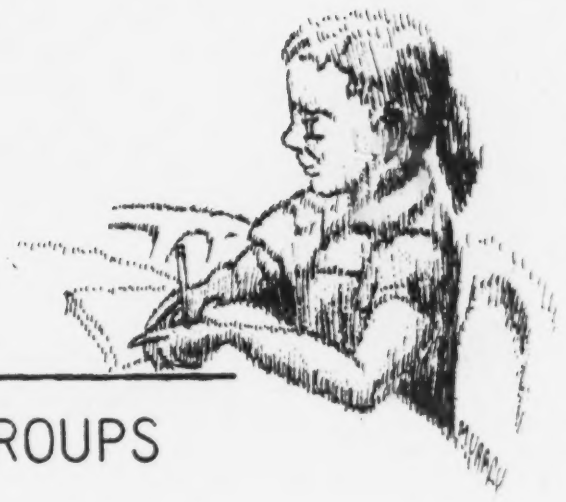
Now I feel this idea "of being responsible for" is strategically located in building a complete definition of accountability. It makes us accountable for being accountable. In other words, would we like done to us what we are doing in the name of accountability in reading?

In summary, we must be accountable in reading. We need to recognize and apply all the current definitions used to construct a concept of accountability. Reading accountability suggests that we must:

- assign reading responsibility,
- deem a philosophy of reading,
- render a reading curriculum,
- answer in judgment, and
- be accountable for what we do in the name of accountability.

Our slogan must be, "Get Behind Accountability (as a total concept), and Push!"

PART TWO



INTEREST GROUPS

General Session Address:
"Psycho-linguistics and Reading"--
Dr. Kenneth S. Goodman

Summary of Talk-With Session

Small Interest Group Sessions

INTRODUCTION

PART TWO is devoted to the general session presentation and talk-with session on psycho-linguistics, as well as a variety of topics which were presented to small interest groups and which were developed around the theme, Accountability. Some of the hand-outs have been incorporated as parts of the disseminated content presented in these group sessions. In instances where the group speakers adhered closely to prepared texts, the speeches are included in full.

PSYCHOLINGUISTICS AND READING

Kenneth S. Goodman
Professor of Elementary Education
Wayne State University

Psycho-linguistics is a term that some people have built up some familiarity with while others find that it is just a long word. One definition I recently heard is that a psycho-linguist is a deranged polyglot. When people hear that I am interested in linguistics they ask me how many languages I speak, because the assumption is that a linguist is somebody who speaks languages. Of course, that makes us all linguists because we all do speak languages and we all are expert users of at least one language.

Even a six-year old who comes to us to read and to learn to read is already a competent user of a language in terms of his needs at the time, which is an important issue for us to keep in mind, particularly in relationship to your general topic for this conference of accountability. My feeling is that we are first, last and always accountable to the children we teach. That is, they have a right to expect something from us and that accountability overrides every responsibility to their parents or society or the community, or civilization, or anything else. If

we can't answer their questions about what we've done to and for them, we're in serious difficulty.

How does psycho-linguistics fit into all this - and how does it fit in particularly to reading? Psycho-linguistics is the study of how thought and language are interrelated. As we understand how thought is conveyed through language, we can see that language is crucial in learning - not simply a part of the curriculum but central to all learning. Language is, perhaps, the most uniquely human of all our attributes. Human beings alone can symbolically represent their thoughts, so that they produce language almost at will that isn't quite like any language they've ever heard or that anyone else has ever heard - and yet, be reasonably assured that people who speak the same language will understand. That's a unique human attribute.

Language is more than the medium of communication, though that is its fundamental purpose, and why we develop it. Language comes into existence as a means of communication. Human beings are social animals and must communicate with each other to survive, especially, as our needs become more complex. Besides that, however, language becomes the medium of thought, not thought itself but its vehicle, so that we can transform our experiences into concepts. We can mull

over in our minds, manipulate through language, talk to ourselves, in a sense encode for ourselves higher understandings or new understandings. And it's easy to see that language becomes central to the learning process itself. Without language humans could be very much limited in their ability to learn. With language, we have the capacity to reach to, and transform experience.

As I began to see language as central to learning I became aware that we have available to us new bodies of knowledge, new insights, that the burgeoning science of linguistics has developed. There were new ways of looking at language, sometimes conflicting. As with any field that experiences a regeneration or flurry of activity there are schools following upon schools - positions emerge and then counter-positions emerge, descriptive linguistics and transformational linguistics, and stratificational linguistics - each with different vantage points and different views. But the important thing is that knowledge is being generated.

We know a lot about language. It isn't the mysterious process that it once was, nor is it something to be simply taken for granted. Learning to talk is not like learning to walk - it's a very complex kind of thing and something involved not only in the development of an individual, but

a society, a culture, as well. Something that we can learn a lot from is how people learn language originally; that can help us a great deal in dealing with questions of learning literacy and learning how to help people use language more effectively. I think that is what school is all about. As I dug into this, I felt looking at the literature on reading and texts on the teaching of reading and the reading process, that there were whole gaps - that somehow we had missed the point, that reading is, in fact, a language process. There are four language processes: speaking and listening, writing and reading. Somehow we had thought of reading as something different, something isolated, something isolatable, rather than a language process, the direct counterpart of listening. Nobody has ever found the group of people, however primitive, however removed from other civilizations, from other cultures, without language. There are no pre-language human societies. If there ever were, we don't know. But there are none in existence. But there are lots of pre-literate human societies. Not all cultures arrived at the point where a written language was either necessary or developed. One of the situations in the world today is that we have societies that are moving toward literacy but have large segments of their populations that don't necessarily need to be literate to operate in their daily lives. Sometimes they go to school and they learn literacy and they lose it because they have no use for it in their daily lives. The questions of how literacy developed,

how it functions, how it relates to the development of language itself, those have become rather crucial issues.

Then, as I began to study the reading process in a research program that's been going for about nine years now, I became aware that it is not enough to know how language works; it's important to know how it's used, that is. how does a user of language operate with language in such a way that he's effective with it. If we're going to teach a child to read we must understand that what we're teaching him is a process of language use, the difference in reading is that it's in a graphic display, in contrast to the sequences of sounds that represent our spoken language. But the goal is the same. Listeners attempt, actively, though it would appear that they're passive, to engage in language use. The goal of the speaker is to take a message and encode it effectively enough that the listener will be able to reconstruct the message by decoding that language, by operating on it. Reading is also a process of going from language to thought. The language is capable of representing meaning without itself having meaning and the reader is able to reconstruct that message (that's a psycho-linguistic way of saying comprehend). In the stream of sounds the listener is operating on, there is nothing intrinsic that in any way is meaning. Users have assigned meaning to it. They have a complex code and that code is shared sufficiently without too much difference between users. The speaker has no way

of projecting his message into his listener's head. He can only broadcast it and hope that he's done that effectively enough that it may be reconstructed. Now what I'm suggesting, then, is very basic. Psycho-linguistics is not simply tangential to reading, it is foundational to it. Reading is, in fact, a psycho-linguistic process, one in which thought and language are interactive. That means we have to organize what we know about reading in terms of that kind of process and then ask ourselves what else we need to know. How can we understand this process? How can we know what one must do to get the message from the graphic display?

In this manner much that we know gains a new kind of validity, a new kind of understanding. For instance, we've known for a long time that starting with the child's language makes a great deal of sense and works in teaching kinds to read. We've known that intuitively, because teachers listen to kinds and are aware of how they react. And we've known that if you use the kid's own language somehow they respond to it. But we haven't sufficiently understood why that works the way it does. If we understand however, that a child learning to read is already a skilled user of the language and that if we move from his competence in all language to reading it we can make it most possible for him to use his competence rather than at cross purposes with him, then we're building; we're expanding on competencies he already has and he can put to work that which he knows about how the language

works, how its grammatical system works, how language expresses thought. That begins to imply certain kinds of things; one of which is that if you're going to be effective in building on the language of the child, you had better be very careful about not tampering with it. If a kid says in an experience story writing session, "Me and James was chunking a ball." and you write, "James and I were throwing a ball." you have defeated the purpose because you have written down somebody else's language, somebody else's grammatical structure, and introduced a confusion, instead of building on the competence.

On the other hand, there are some things we've thought are quite important that turn out not to be so important. One of those is the relationship between written and oral language. We use, as do most people in the world today, an alphabetic system - one that's evolved over centuries, in which the graphic display has a set of direct relationships to oral language, not simply to meaning. Contrast that with the system still used in China, for instance, in which they directly represent the meanings and have no direct relationship to the oral language. The reason that China has decided to keep that system is that it has a great advantage. People who speak dialects of Chinese that are not mutually understandable -- Cantonese and Mandarin, for example -- can read the same newspaper or book and understand it because the graphic relationship is to meaning and each will read it in his own language.

We have that, of course, in our number system. I can write an equation, 3 + 3 = 6, and if I use the arithmetic symbols, a Frenchman or a Russian could read it though his oral rendition of it would be possibly not understandable to me. Those symbols directly relate to the concepts rather than to the oral words that we might use to express them. But we have to understand that though this alphabetic system is economical, and though it's an efficient system and probably in many respects superior to any other kinds of writing systems, the goal of a reader in acquiring literacy is to become equally able to get meaning from written language as it is to get meaning from oral language. A truly literate person can operate effectively with both alternatives in the settings for which they're most appropriate. In some situations one works better than the other.

For awhile we got into the comfortable habit of saying that "reading was speech wrote down." That's an interesting concept and one that will help kids plug in what they know but it's not essentially true. There are certain differences between written and oral language that do complicate the use of one or the other. If you begin to see that a reader has to be able to go directly from print to meaning, as he has from speech to meaning, then you have to understand that introducing speech as an intermediate step between the written language and meaning, is a kind of crutch and not necessarily a helpful one.

Teaching kids to say words in response to their graphic form or say sounds in response to letters or patterns of letters, introduces something which eventually, if not immediately, has to be dropped. An effective reader goes from print to meaning, not from print to oral language to meaning. I don't know yet to what extent in reading, an alphabetic system, you have to learn some relationships to oral language. To what extent does that happen anyway because of the alphabetic character? We've known that kids with no phonic training at all do, in fact, develop some pretty powerful generalizations about the relationship between oral and written language. Maybe again, though we've gotten "out-of-focus" by this notion that written language is and always remains a secondary representation of speech. If we re-orient ourselves to regard written language as a parallel language form, that perhaps will help.

It may sound like a lot of what I'm saying is very theoretical. Let's consider, therefore, the relationship between theory and practice in terms of understanding the reading process and teaching reading at this point in time. We have developed in the reading field, a marvelous betterfly collection, a tremendous bag of knowledge and teachers of reading or clinicians acquire, over a period of years, control over this bag of tricks. They have an intuitive feeling that when confronted with a kid who has certain kinds of behavior and reactions if they try this, rather than that,

it's likely to be effective. But it needed a Darwin to come along and say, "Wait a minute, we need some kind of over-arching theory in order to organize this butterfly collection. We have to stop talking about big butterflies and little butterflies and start looking at some of the more significant or perhaps more subtle interrelationships." That's a point at which we've arrived in reading. Reading was in need of theory. And the basis for this theory now exists; in treating the reader as a user of language we can begin to put the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together. We can begin to organize and classify the butterfly collection and throw out the duplicates and fill in the holes, so that we get the full picture. On that basis we can begin to say "Now I understand why that works." "Now I understand what this kid is doing." "Now, in fact, that I know what he's doing, I can predict what he will do." I'm talking about the trans-formation of the teaching of reading, from an art to a science, not in a cold, dehumanizing sense, but the sense of understanding how this works and being able then to operate on the basis of sound knowledge. I guess what I'm saying is practice that's atheoretical is trial and error and has to be circular. When it becomes theoretical, it acquires a base on which to build and grow.

On the other hand, of course, theory that's impractical is very bad theory. When a theory loses touch with reality, when it no longer explains and predicts, then it has to be revised or abandoned. The best example that I know of is that which space people provided for us. Who would have ever thought that the theory of gravity was subject to revision? But when we sent an object to the moon and wanted to pinpoint the place where it would land, we discovered that gravitational theory failed. It didn't land where it was supposed to land because it didn't act the way gravitational theory said it should act. So they had to go back to the drawing board, back to the computers and rework gravitational theory. Now, it turned out that modification in this case was all that was necessary, and thank goodness they didn't have to come up with a whole new theory. The point that I'm trying to make is that theory is never reality. It's always a representation of that reality. A good theory holds up when tested against reality. Before we had a telescope that could show us the outer planets in our solar system, we knew that they were there. We knew where they were and how big they were. And then all we had to do was look where we knew they were when we had a telescope that could show us them **and** there they were. That's good theory. Now, what I'm saying here is that theory and practice have to come together and there constantly has to be an interplay between them.

When reality contradicts theory, you can't reject reality. You have to go back and see what's wrong with the theory. This is the kind of research I've been involved in. We give kids things to read that they haven't seen before and then try to explain what they do. And in the process, we've developed a very complex psycholinguistic analysis of what they do and a theory on which that analysis is based. And both the analysis and the theory are in constant states of revision because kids keep doing things that we didn't expect them to do. And when they do, we have to figure out why. What's going on? The more we look at reality in the light of theory, the more we understand about the reality and the closer the theory gets to it.

I'm building this point because I want to comment on what I think are some rather immediate trends in the nation today. Recently at a conference in Washington for school administrators I heard the national director of the Right-to-Read program talk about the need for improving reading instruction particularly with the minority groups and his determination that we had to solve the problems. There were discussions of objectives: 95% reading at 5.5 level by the end of the sixth grade and 95% reading at the 8th grade level by the high school graduation. But I didn't hear talk about input. That is, the outputs are clear and nobody really argues about that, the goal is to get kids to read effectively. How are we going to achieve our goals unless we feed in more knowledge, unless we feed in new ideas and better understandings

so that we know why what we're doing is working to the extent that it's working and why it's not working to the extent that it's not working. Unless we understand more, we're going to expend a lot of energy, build up a lot of expectations and end in great frustrations.

I'm very optimistic that within the decade, we can in fact, solve the basic problem of literacy in this country. But not simply through dedicating ourselves to do so, not simply through effort and energy. There has to be knowledge and insight on which we move and the key group of course, are the teachers.

Reading problems can only be solved by knowing more and more and that knowledge has to find itself to the point where teachers are actually operating with kids. Teachers have to know something about what they're doing and be able to use it. I can't accept the notion that we could write a reading program that would be teacherproof, or develop a machine at which a child can sit and teach himself to read without any assistance from any kind of teacher. I'm not saying that some kids couldn't learn to read that way, but they'd probably be the kids who could learn to read almost any way, even without school. It's the kids who aren't learning who we need to be concerned about. That requires a teacher with a great deal of knowledge. Now maybe that teacher will be operating in a very different way than some teachers operate.

One thing we've learned, for instance, from our research, is that every time a child reads something he hasn't seen before, he teaches himself something. Something happens. A very simple corrollary is that to the extent you can get kids to read, you have made an important contribution to their learning how to read. But that requires a number of things. It requires relevant materials. It also requires an understanding of where they are in terms of what they can handle and manage and find useful at any point in time.

I want to say a few things about the reading process, some things that I think I know now on the basis of research and study. One is that reading is simply not matching sounds to letters, though that may be something a reader does in the process of reading. We have tended to confuse reading with some of its conditions. Sure readers can name words, and sure readers do, in fact, develop relationships, concepts, generalizations about how written language relates to oral language. But a key thing that the reader has to do is to get meaning. That's the name of the game; that's what we read for. There has to be a message and he has to be able to reconstruct it. And everything else is a means to an end; everything else is simply part of the process. In this reading process, the reader operates with several different kinds of information simultaneously. So does the listener. He's hearing sounds, but he's less aware of sounds than he is of a pattern of language. And on the basis of a little bit of auditory input, he's able to predict whole sequences.

He can do that because language has structure and because he, in learning language, learned the structure of the language. He learned how it works, he learned, for instance, that when he hears somebody say, "Johnny hit" that what's coming after that is the object. That's not always true in all languages. That's the way English works: subject-verb-object is a very strong, dominant pattern. You know what can't follow that so you zero in through these kinds of constraints and use a little bit of input to predict the rest.

Perception in reading is not a simple question of seeing, identifying, or recognizing, in fact, at any point in time, what a reader thinks he sees is only partly what he sees and partly what he expects to see. And what he expects to see is built on his knowledge of language. He knows how it works. If I said to you, "I'm thinking of a three letter word that starts with t" you would be able to tell me what the second letter is most likely to be; and you could tell me with great confidence what it can't be. For instance, you can't have "tl" in a three letter word. You might have it in the middle of a word, but you can't have it at the beginning of a three letter word. It just can't happen. Some things are very highly predictable. When you see "q" in an English word, you know that there is only one letter that can follow it. You have a hundred percent predictability there. One of the things that's most important for a language

user to learn is this ability to predict. He does it by generalizing the structure. The transformational linguists have shown us that in learning a language, one doesn't learn by sentences. What one does is induce from the language that one encounters its structure, its rules. And on the basis of these rules, one acquires ability to generate new, unfamiliar structures that other people will understand. You cannot use language unless you have mastered its structure and by that I mean, of course, the structure of the language which you most frequently encounter; not somebody else's version of what's good language. That's another thing about this relevancy business. Relevancy in language means my language, not somebody else's language or somebody else's notion of what good language is. In operating in reading a reader does use graphic input, but he also supplies the syntactic, grammatical, structural input and then, very important, has to supply meaning himself. Meaning, in fact, is both the output and a major portion of the input in language.

Here are a couple of very simple examples. My daughter, for her 15th birthday party, was making pizza. She had used a recipe for the sauce borrowed from a friend's mother and the hand-written recipe had said, she thought, to put one pound of butter in the pan to brown the onions. She knew that that was a lot so she only put a half pound in. What actually had happened was that the friend's mother had written 1 lb.

butter, but had forgotten to cross the t. It should have been 1 Tb butter. It was very logical seeing lb to think that it was a pound. Now, her reading problem was a matter of a lack of meaning input. A skilled cook would not simply have said, "A pound is too much, I'll only put in a half-pound." A skilled cook would have said, "That can't be right, it must be tablespoon." In the same sense, a chemist operating with a formula who accidentally reads sulphite as sulphate (only one letter difference) if he knows his discipline, would immediately realize that that can't be right. Even if there's a misprint he would realize it. If he didn't realize it, it would mean that he lacked enough understanding of what he was doing. Meaning input would be lacking. Letters can become very important, but we ought not to think of that as an isolated kind of importance. It's not so important that the reader see every letter, but it's very important that he have some way of testing what he thought he saw, what he thought, in fact, he had read.

That test comes out, no matter how we look at it, to center around meaning. That is, a reader has to be able to say when he's finished reading something whether it made sense to him. If he doesn't know when he's finished reading whether it made sense he's in some difficulty. Every reader has that problem. I hope that in reading some of the things that

I've written, you haven't had that problem, but being realistic, I expect it's so. When I read a legal contract I have to admit to illiteracy. And I call a literate friend and pay him for his advice. A lawyer who can read legal language has enough meaning input that he can make sense out of it and can tell me whether it's something I should sign or not sign.

I can't over-emphasize the fact that meaning is input; meaning is the test; meaning is the output as well. The reader constantly asks himself if something makes sense and reprocesses it when it doesn't. He's also constantly applying a language test. He's also saying to himself, "Did that sound like language to me?" If it doesn't sound like language, he has to reject it. Now because those two tests are so important, I think you can see that a teacher has to be very careful about how he functions as a child is moving into this process. If the teacher makes the child dependent on him, if every time he runs into trouble he says, "What's that word?" and it is supplied then the process is short circuited. Instead of his learning to test his own reading against his meaning screen, he becomes dependent on the teacher. And it's possible to short circuit in such a way that the reader eventually comes to sound like he knows what he's reading orally but cuts out the important loop of understanding which is the basic goal. I suspect on the basis of some rather

early insights into research that we've done with kids in 8th and 10th grade, that we have very few kids with no reading skills, but there are an awful lot of kids who don't get much meaning from what they read. And I worry about the possibility that we may have taught them these short-circuited processes - that we've made reading a mechanical process that doesn't produce meaning. Maybe we've asked them to read too much that's irrelevant to them, too much that wouldn't make sense, and if it did, wouldn't have any interest to them.

We've known a long time that you can't use a readability formula to judge the difficulty of any particular reading selection for any particular kid and not consider his background and interest in the topic. I used to carry around with me a copy of "Hot Rod" magazine and ask people in the audience to read a few paragraphs and explain them to the group. It got too embarrassing because not very many teachers know too much about hot rods or are interested. But I've asked some kids who are remedial readers in high school to read it and explain it and they could, even though on a readability scale I'm sure it would have been very difficult for them.

I'm going to conclude with a couple of key things I think maybe are basic to moving toward what I'd call a theory of reading instruction. One that's crucial is that we have to build on the pre-existing language competence of the kids we're teaching to read in the fullest sense. And

I didn't qualify that. We must build on their language competence, regardless of the social status that the language form has that they're speaking. Any time we confuse teaching them to speak a preferred form of language with teaching them to read, we introduce confusion.

Secondly, we must have comprehension-centered reading instruction. That is, the teacher and the learner have to be constantly aware of meaning as a goal and activities that we design, whether they're in books, basal readers, or things that teachers work out for that time with those kids, have to be comprehension-centered. If you slice language up, cut it up into pieces, if you dissect it into letters, sounds or words, you turn it into a set of abstractions that is no longer language. I've been using the example that language is not a salami that can be sliced as thin as you want and still retain all its properties. When you break it apart and remove it from meaning, it's no longer language, and the task of learning it is an entirely different task. I think that has a lot of implications for some things that are common practice now.

Third, we have to use nothing less than language that is natural to the kids we're teaching, if we do we turn it into abstraction. In the name of simplifying the task of learning to read, we complicate it.

Fourth, relevance is now not important simply for human reasons, but because people cannot read material for which they lack interest and background.

It may well be that it's impossible to design materials that are going to be uniformly useful, every part of them, for all kids everywhere. We're going to have to have teachers who know when not to use something, and when to stress and build on particular parts of programs. Again, of course, language experience becomes important because that can grow right out of the experience of the kids and utilize their language and therefore be maximally relevant.

Let me state again another point. Don't confuse learning to read with learning preferred language forms or confuse teaching kids to read with teaching them language. We have to fully appreciate the high level of competence that kids have achieved in language learning and build on that and not assume language is something learncd in school. At best, we can help kids become more effective users of language, we can't teach them language in school.

The last thing I want to say related to your general topic is that it turns out, sometimes happily so, that things come together. I'd believed for a long time in centering on children, understanding the learner when we teach, and accepting kids and fulfilling our obligation to be accountable to the kids we teach. And it turns out as we learn more about language learning and reading that this is almost the key concept to teaching kids to read. Unless we fully understand what they are at any point in time and what they can do

and what they know, we can't really help them, we can't really participate in making it easier for them to learn to read or helping them to become more effective readers, but if we do understand the kids and see then how language works and how this process of using language operates, then we can put it all together and fulfill our commitment to the kids.

SUMMARY OF TALK-WITH SESSION

In the session after his formal presentation, Dr. Kenneth Goodman replied to a number of questions from the audience dealing with various aspects of language. He pointed out that children at a very early age have learned to process language and do not simply respond to a string of words but respond in terms of a structured English utterance.

In response to a question about thought and pre-language and thought beyound language, Dr. Goodman indicated that the development of thought and language can be traced independently. He said that one develops language because he has ideas which need expression, and this causes him to extend and reach for and develop or even invent language in some cases. However, the thought cannot precede it by too far because when you run out of language to cope with your thoughts, you are very much limited in the sense that you have no vehicle then for manipulating and organizing and, in a sense, coding thoughts.

Another question with which Dr. Goodman dealt related to the method of handling the differences found in classroom language and values and background. He advocated that teachers regard difference as an unavoidable attribute of language. Because of the geographic, economic, and social mobility in our society, there are tremendous variations of language in

any urban classroom. He suggested that teachers accept this fact and then do two things: "learn to listen to kids so that we don't argue with them against what all their experience tells them is true; and get them to realize that difference is something that is expected and that it is okay."

In reply to a question about introducing dialect readers for black children, Dr. Goodman described two experiments in which this is being attempted. He indicated that it is too early to know if there is validity to this approach beyond the theoretical. He pointed to the desirability of first literacy instruction being in the native language, as in the case of Spanish-speaking children. He concluded that if teachers will accept the child's language, encourage him to read in his own dialect even with materials which are not written in dialect, we will have eliminated a lot of the difficulty.

THE LEARNING CENTER

William L. Brown, Principal
Anne Arundel County

The Learning Center was established by the Board of Education to provide a resource for working with students whose behavior is disturbing to their parents, school and community. These students are generally under sixteen years of age who have experienced juvenile court, psychological and psychiatric evaluation and treatment, and the services of other community agencies. The program of the Learning Center is partially supported by a grant from the Maryland State Department of Mental Hygiene.

Students are referred to the Learning Center through the Department of Pupil Services, by parents, other county schools, Juvenile Court, psychiatrists, and other community agencies.

Philosophy and Objectives

Labels acquired by students prior to their coming to the Learning Center are generally not useful in our work.

The total program of the Learning Center is based on a "behavioral" or "behavior modification" model. The environment is engineered or structured on the basis of (a) the behavioral objectives or the defined behavior we want to occur.

(b) the stimuli that are to control it, and (c) the reinforcers available to strengthen the behavior. Briefly stated, we attempt to provide an environment which will increase the probability of a behavior being emitted and then reinforcing successive approximations of that behavior until the behavioral objective or goal is obtained.

Academic Program

An academic program of individually prescribed instruction is provided. Contingency contracts are signed with each student which allow him to select an activity of his choice upon successful completion of an activity or task prescribed by the staff.

In contingency contracting, each student has a voice and choice in selecting content, method and time in the basic area subjects of math, science, English and social studies. He signs individual contracts with each department stating objectives. In signing contingency contracts and arranging their own schedules, students practice decision making.

Behavioral objectives are reinforced (rewarded) by point system. Appropriate behaviors earn points. Points are used to buy optional or interest parts of curriculum - art, music, lounge, field trips, P.E., etc.

Students practice managing their own finances and assuming responsibility for consequences of their behavior by managing their points and schedule.

Parent Program

A weekly consultant service is provided to parents. The objectives are to strengthen the role of parents by teaching parents behavior modification techniques. Parents learn to (1) pinpoint behaviors they would like strengthened or weakened in their children, (2) observe and record these behaviors, (3) develop through consultation schedules to consequate these behaviors.

Summary

The chart which appears below shows the objectives of the learning center program as they relate to the program itself and the terminal behaviors sought.

OBJECTIVES	PROGRAM	TERMINAL BEHAVIORS
I. To shape and strengthen the following behaviors in students: A. Basic skills in language arts, Social Studies, Math and Science. B. Self-management through: 1) opportunity to make decisions regarding their own schedules. 2) opportunity to manage their own finances (points) 3) opportunity to have some control over curriculum content. 4) assuming responsibility for the consequences of their own behavior.	1. Individualized instruction and scheduling. A. Contingency contracting- each student has a voice and choice in selecting content, method and time in the basic area subjects of math, science, English and social studies. He signs individual contracts with each department stating objectives. B. In signing contingency contracts and arranging their own schedules, students practice decision making. Behavioral objectives are reinforced (rewarded) by point system. Appropriate behaviors earn points. Points are used to buy optional or interest parts of curriculum - art, music, lounge, field trips, P.E., etc. Students practice managing their own finances and assuming responsibility for consequences of their behavior by managing their points and schedule.	1. Measurable positive changes in academic and social behaviors. A. Measurable changes in skill development. B. Measurable positive changes in social behaviors. C. Successful return to regular school program.
II. To shape and strengthen the role of parents by: A. Teaching parents behavior modification techniques. B. Weekly consultation with parent groups to teach parents to: 1) pinpoint behaviors they would like strengthened or weekened in their children. 2) observe and record these behaviors. 3) develop through consultation schedules to consequate these behaviors.		II. Develop measurable skill in behavior modification techniques and contingency planning.

OBJECTIVES (cont.)	PROGRAM (cont.)	TERMINAL BEHAVIORS (cont.)
III. To shape and strengthen the following behaviors in teachers: A. Skill in behavior control. B. Skill in individualizing instruction. C. Skill in planning effective and efficient educational objectives.	III. Weekly instruction and practical experience in behavior modification techniques is required of all staff members. An observation program is operated using trained observers and Video tape recordings to feed back data to teachers on student-teacher interaction. Teachers are taught to write contingency contracts in behavioral terms, to plan instructional objectives, and to measure behavior changes (learning). Teachers are given instruction and supervised practicum experience in using positive reinforcement to accomplish educational objectives.	III. Measurable skill in pinpointing, recording, and consequating behavior. Measurable skill in contingency contracting and individualizing instruction.
IV. To strengthen the educational program of Anne Arundel County by: A. Providing an educational opportunity for children who are seriously disturbing to the educational program of other children in the regular school program. B. Training teachers and other school personnel in behavior modification C. Developing prototype educational designs and programs.	IV. Experimentation with curriculum development and design, some of which could be applicable to regular school programs.	IV. Use teachers, techniques, and curricula in regular school programs.
V. To collect data and generate research.	V. All behavioral (educational) objectives stated in measurable terms, comprehensive collection, graphing, and evaluation of data. Use of data to make curriculum changes.	V. Publication and distribution of all data.

OPTIMUM USE OF READING CENTER PERSONNEL

Nell Meyers, Supervisor
The Reading Center
Prince George's County

Panel Participants:

Mrs. Gladys Billups, Reading Consultant, The Reading Center
Mr. William Hall, Elementary Supervisor, Prince George's County Public Schools
Miss Anne Pinkney, Principal, Clinton Grove Elementary School
Mr. John Sullin, Reading Consultant, The Reading Center

The panel presented the services offered to the Prince George's County Public Schools by the Reading Center. Discussion focused on the responsibilities of the Reading Center staff in providing the services and of the school and supervisory personnel using the services. "Accountability" was considered as a cooperative process involving communication and evaluation.

The Reading Center has two primary functions (1) individual reading evaluations and (2) staff and program development. Individual reading evaluation provides information about pupils who have specific needs in reading through formal testing at the Reading Center and informal diagnosis at the pupil's school. The Reading Center assists in staff and program development for the improvement of reading instruction in the elementary and secondary schools through inservice education and teacher education.

A description of the two primary functions of the Reading Center follow:

Individual Reading Evaluations

Individual reading evaluations are available for pupils who have specific needs in reading. The public schools of Prince George's County, both elementary and secondary, may refer pupils for this service. Each evaluation consists of two parts - formal testing and ongoing diagnosis through relay teaching at the pupil's school. After the reading evaluation is completed, a written summary of the diagnostic findings and recommendations is sent to the parents, the school and the Department of Pupil Personnel.

Formal Testing

As soon as possible after a pupil is referred for a reading evaluation he is scheduled for a formal testing. A reading specialist administers a battery of tests in reading and related areas to determine the pupil's reading levels, to identify his strengths and to determine which factors contribute to his problems. The specialist assesses the pupil's learning aptitudes and abilities in order to determine the most suitable method of instruction.

The time required for this session is approximately three hours. Secondary pupils are usually tested in their schools, and the Reading Center confers with the school to

arrange time and space for the testing. Elementary pupils are tested at the Reading Center, and the parents transport the pupil. The Center is responsible for contacting the parents and completing the necessary arrangements. The school is notified of the time and date so that the pupil may be excused from his regular schedule for the testing session.

The specialist schedules a short conference with the parent immediately following the initial testing session. He explains the purposes of the reading evaluation and plans a follow-up conference to discuss the pupil's reading needs.

Informal Diagnosis (relay teaching)

Relay teaching follows formal testing and consists of eight to ten sessions of instruction which the specialists conducts in the pupil's school. The purpose of the relay teaching is to complete a more comprehensive diagnosis, to initiate instruction on the level at which the pupil can immediately experience success and to determine the methods and materials most appropriate for the continuation of his reading instruction.

The specialist interprets the results of the reading evaluation to the school personnel and assists the teacher who has the responsibility for the pupils reading instruction by demonstrating and explaining the use of methods and materials which he used in relay teaching.

Staff and Program Development

For the improvement of reading instruction on the elementary and secondary levels, the Reading Center assists through inservice education and teacher education.

Inservice Education

The staff of the Reading Center concentrates on assisting school staffs in their efforts to improve reading instruction through the interaction and working together of reading specialists and teachers within the school. The specialized knowledge and skills of the Reading Center personnel may be utilized to include the following:

- aiding classroom teachers in screening pupils for grouping and for the identification of specific needs
- demonstrating teaching techniques and the use of appropriate methods and materials
- assisting teachers in implementing innovative approaches
- assisting teachers in applying reading skills in the content areas
- organizing and conducting workshops in reading on the local school level
- Criteria for Requesting Services

  Prior to making a written request, administrators and teachers should assess the needs of the school and determine how the Reading Center staff can appropriately assist them. They should allot sufficient time for planning the most beneficial application of the services.

- Procedures for Reading Center services within a school may be initiated by the school administrator; and on the supervisory level, by the area and content supervisors.
- Requests should be sent in writing to the Reading Center. The request may be discussed with the supervisor or assistant principal before submitting the written request.
- Plans should be made to use the consultants for follow-up services as the needs arise

Teacher Education

The Reading Center staff is ready to assist in the organization of reading courses and workshops and to conduct such courses for the teachers of Prince George's County as directed by its Board of Education.

It becomes increasingly vital that classroom and content area teachers develop skills in teaching to meet the challenges of the ever-changing demands of a constantly changing environment. They must be able to present subject matter on a level commensurate with the pupil's level of understanding and in a form to which he can respond and which he will value.

Thus, it becomes apparent that the staff of the Reading Center, organized to give leadership and expertise in reading, must assume responsibility for becoming actively engaged in the area of teacher education.

TEACHING VALUES - PRODUCTS OR PROCESSES

James Wirth
Richard O'Donnell
University of Maryland

A society creates ideal images of what the behavior in thought and action of its members should be. These images, when known and sanctioned by the members of the society, give form to its values. A value is an ideal, a model setting forth a desired and esteemed possible social reality. In essence values are beliefs -- beliefs that the idealized ways of living and acting are the vest ways for the society.

As societies evolved in the historical process, values changed. Each generation couples what it has inherited from the past with the knowledge acquired from present experiences to shape the value systems of its members. Institutions, such as the family and the school, continually transmit values to on-coming generations. It then becomes a responsibility of the school in a democratic society to help children become more skillful in clarifying issues, in verifying facts on which they believe their value judgments rest, in analyzing the soundness of the logic by which one value is based on another, and in examining the logical consistency among their values.

A look at this process of valuing may make clear how we define a value. Unless something satisfies all seven of the criteria noted below, we don't call it a value. In other words, for a value to result, all of the following seven requirements must apply. Collectively, they describe the process of valuing.

1. Choosing freely. If something is a fact to guide one's life whether or not authority is watching, it must be a result of free choice. If there is coercion, the result is not likely to stay with one for long, especially when out of the range of the source of that coercion. Values must be freely selected if they are to be really valued by the individual.

2. Choosing from among alternatives. This definition of values is concerned with things that are chosen by the individual and, obviously, there can be no choice if there are no alternatives from which to choose. It makes no sense, for example, to say that one values eating. One really has no choice in the matter. What one may value is certain types of food or certain forms of eating, but not eating itself. We must all obtain nourishment to exist; there is no room for decision. Only when a choice is possible, when there is more than one alternative from which to choose, do we say a value can result.

3. Choosing after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative. Impulsive or thoughtless choices do not lead to values as we define them. For something intelligently and meaningfully to guide one's life, it must emerge from a weighing and an understanding. Only when the consequences of each of the alternatives are clearly understood can one make intelligent choices. There is an important cognitive factor here. A value can emerge only with thoughtful consideration of the range of the alternatives and consequences in a choice.

4. Prizing and cherishing. When we value something, it has a positive tone. We prize it, cherish it, esteem it, respect it, hold it dear. We are happy with our values. A choice, even when we have made it freely and thoughtfully, may be a choice we are not happy to make. We may choose to fight in a war, but be sorry circumstances make that choice reasonable. In our definition, values flow from choices that we are glad to make. We prize and cherish the guides to life that we call values.

5. Affirming. When we have chosen something freely, after consideration of the alternatives, and then we are proud of our choice, glad to be associated with it, we are likely to affirm that choice when asked about it. We are willing to publicly affirm our values. We may even be willing to champion them. If we are ashamed of a choice, if we would not make our position known when appropriately asked, we would not be dealing with values but something else.

6. Acting upon choices. Where we have a value, it shows up in aspects of our living. We may do some reading about things we value. We are likely to form friendships or to be in organizations in ways that nourish our values. In short, for a value to be present, life itself must be affected. Nothing can be a value that does not, in fact, give direction to actual living. The person who talks about something but can never do anything about it is dealing with something other than a value.

7. Repeating. Where something reaches the stage of a value, it is very likely to reappear on a number of occasions in the life of the person who holds it. It shows up in several situations, at several different times. We would not think of something that appeared once in a life and never again as a value. Values tend to have a persistence, tend to make a pattern in a life.

To review this definition, we see values as based on these three processes: choosing, prizing, and acting.

Choosing: (1) freely
(2) from alternatives
(3) after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative.

Prizing: (4) cherishing, being happy with the choice
(5) willing to affirm the choice publicly

Acting: (6) doing something with the choice

(7) repeatedly, in some pattern of life

Those processes collectively define valuing. Results of the valuing process are called values. The rationale of going through the value process is to develop critical thinking. It is believed that students will think about situations in life and become more aware of themselves and hence value themselves.

The product of values was demonstrated by using a series of filmstrips that showed different situations. An example of the type of one situation was a picture of two white boys being approached by a black boy. The black boy held out his hand for a handshake. The projector was stopped. The students were asked, "What will happen? What would you do?" The students were instructed to give their answer using the value process method.

Unless a child can see that he as a person, has value to the world the problems he may manifest in reading will never be solved.

Discussion

The main premise of the discussion was the problem of motivating the underachiever. It was pointed out that underachievers cannot be classed in any group such as "black," "poor," "affluent," etc. If a child has never had the desire to learn to read then that child has not seen the value of reading.

In addition to the presentation and discussion, a series of "learning experience stations" were constructed for participant involvement. Hopefully these "stations" served as suggested activities for carry-over into classroom situations.

RETHINKING OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHILDREN

Donald Pfau
Montgomery County Public Schools
Supervisor of English, Language
Arts and Reading

More and more, persons of today are seriously thinking about the education they're a part of because they call themselves educators. I hope that you and I can be counted among them.

Thinking about what you are doing is a rough business. In fact, it's often too painful for those of us whose defense mechanisms are heavily encrusted with self-satisfaction and self-assuredness. Education is no longer a place for persons who have pat ideas, but for those of us who are seeking to cope with new dimensions of human involvement and intent -- persons who are not afraid of newness and their place in it, persons who are courageously facing the issues of the day. Because the teacher, with an understanding of the humanity of children with whom he or she interacts, is still the only one who can make a difference in a child's life or his learning, the teacher is placed in a role in today's system of education that demands the utmost in psychological openness, inter-personal dynamism, and the willingness to stand up and be counted.

I, for one, am tired of the "experts" telling these teachers and other educators what they ought to be doing. Last year it was relevance, behavioral objectives, the teaching act, and performance criteria. Now it's accountability and quality assurance. I am tired of such words -- invented words -- awash today in education which prevent us from facing the real accountability issue in 1970 education -- the great immovable, seemingly impenetrable lack of sensitivity and feeling with which the learning environments of children are being forged and with which children's needs are being described. What's going to be next? When are we going to stand up, act proudly, and define the quality education for 1970 for which we will be held accountable? When are we going to describe what is a humane and profitable education for kids who are soon to be graduated ceremoniously from schools -- if they don't drop out -- into today's over-live society, the one teeming with pollution, corruption, lack of sensitivity -- the society desensitized to human communication, unequal on the value scale, and demoralizing in its treatment of those men in need? When are we going to demand that the price be paid to assure all children a fair and humane chance to learn, and when are we going to pay the price of politically organizing in a fashion necessary to assure ourselves more legitimate control over the educational destinies of the children with whom we work?

Did you ever wonder, just a little bit, if the money men of big business and politics aren't capitalizing on our ineptitude as professionals to run a tight and orderly ship? For example, a recent article in a popular news magazine describes the number of new private businesses that are springing up to cultivate what is fast becoming a national market -- phony ideas for fixing up schooling. The entrance on stage of, in some instances, unsanctioned and unwanted franchisers and time-sharers in education of children is, to me, a sell-out by educators to those who know little about life, human growth, and learning, but a lot about public frenzy, that they may have created in the first place, and the way to make a fast dollar.

Where do we stand in all of this? What do we want to be held accountable for promoting in the name of education? What are we going to do to chart a different type of accountability course? It appears wildly implausible at this juncture in time that the current, narrowly-defined accountability trend that is already entrenched, can easily be altered unless educators become persons more capable of moral outrage.

Accounting to Yourself

It seems imperative that each of us gets outside ourself long enough to sort through the pieces. Is there any sort of rational or moral sense to the school society in which you have chosen to live day after day with the kids? Do you

even stop to examine the differences between why you think school is necessary and why the kids think it is? Look inside yourself for an answer. Do you have any idea of those things, those principles, those ideas of human learning and living from which you will not retreat? Have you ever set aside all else for awhile to talk to yourself and the youth of today about what living and learning is like -- how it happens, how you facilitate it, what part you play in it? And if you have done this, how often have you changed your ideas? Have you done anything to live up to your ideas -- anything that would merit you at least a beginner's badge as an educational change agent? Can you honestly say that you are operating on your values, that the kids know and understand you are also operating on their values, too? Now just to make sure we're on the same wavelength in this discussion, do you realize I'm asking you to forget curriculum guides, the sacred body of knowledge we've all been imparting all these years, those plans, those units, those cute ideas that everyone likes? I'm asking you to put away those things long enough to take a hard, cold sober look at the kids, their world, their values, their concerns, and their needs. Only then, I believe, can any of us obtain some perspective that will enable us to envision the task that faces education and each of us as individuals. It is essential to see yourself in respect to the job to be done. It is equally essential to start the accountability campaign with yourself, for without yourself with you, there is little chance that any-

thing else will make sense. An honest and penetrating question must be faced -- Why am I doing what I am doing? Personal accountability must be defined in a way which makes sense to you. Can you account to yourself first of all? If you can't, do you have a plan for opening communication channels with yourself?

Accounting to the Kids

Accountability to yourself is only part of the story, though. What about being accountable to the children? It means a type of man for man accounting that may demand vast changes in educational protocol. It means talking to each individual, knowing his ideas, his abilities, his experiences, his background. It means considering the child as he is today, a suitable and worthy being, uniquely endowed to learn. It does not mean looking judgmentally upon a child's background or learning traits as learning deficits, as we often ascribe a child's personal characteristics to be when the child does not perform in prescribed patterns. It means forgetting patterns altogether so that uniqueness of individuals may thrive. It means listening and working with a child before we feel we have a meaningful clue about how to facilitate his learning. It means being earnest about the notion that children's needs don't come in packages or groups as much as they come packaged in ones -- individuals -- personally wrapped. It means being more accountable than we have ever thought of being to the individually wrapped needs of children -- not just the ones that look like they'd fit

into good groupings. It means providing the differentiated learning opportunities that are demanded when urban, rural, suburban, rich, poor, white, black, red, and yellow present themselves as individuals wanting a chance to learn. Accounting for this single concept of education is truthfully more than many of us would care to accept responsibility for. I believe it is also more than we can support in financial terms or professional competence.

Teachers tend to talk with pride about learning groups or what group a child is in -- when the real truth is that he isn't in any group -- he's in a class all by himself. It is an indictment against each of us that there is not a clearer focus throughout the educational world on what we have done for an individual -- his hopes, his ideas, his interests in a subject, his abilities at the moment to do what he's set his mind to do, the specific kind of help he needs to follow through on his plan, and his needs to talk to and interact with others concerning his work. To facilitate a child's development in such terms, and to consider the process a worthy educational climate, is still suspect in many an educational circle where the emphasis is proudly placed on predictable and testable outcomes, mass production and dissemination of knowledge, attainment of achievement levels, and the like. Variability in accountability is a concept that has not been given sufficient support or even breathing room by educators who often find it easier and more politically

expedient to assure minimum levels of proficiency rather than maximum support for individuality. Variability in accountability is equally dead when we talk about standards and mastery rather than educational worth according to individual need. We as educators can avoid the issue altogether. That's our decision. But the question will remain for each of us to answer. Can we account for the personalized learning needs of individual children?

Accounting to the Public

And what about accountability to the public? How well defined is our role in this regard? There is no question about it, we are accountable to the public and the public is concerned about the job the schools are doing: Faith in educators is at a low ebb, and private citizens are out-doing one another in whipping the schools with personal interpretations of the situation and personal solutions to the problems that are defined. It has been concerned with everything from achievement in test scores to noise levels, non-gradedness, multi-aging, and permissiveness. People are steadily proclaiming that everyone has the right to read; unfortunately the public is often swept up in such phrases and slogans without actually realizing the validity of the accusation or the implication involved. The need is great for us to communicate beyond the triteness of a slogan so that the implications of the slogan for individual children in communities are clear.

The public needs to know what educators believe is important for children -- the things for which they would like to be held accountable. The public needs to know that distance which must be run if children are to be given a chance to learn. The public needs to know the ignorance involved in the simplistic answers each of us is hearing to the so-called "reading dilemma." It is our obligation to provide the frame of reference, as hard and impossible as that may seem, to talk with parents in order to build a concept of sound education so that accountability to the public is more a natural occurence among parents, citizens, and educators who are interacting on common points of concern for children. Accountability of this nature is in sharp contrast to the reactionary, emotional, non-educational and defensive manuevering characteristic of many accountability efforts.

Accountability to Whom? For What?

Accountability "to whom" is an important question. Educators are involved in a people business. They're involved with themselves, the kids, and the public. Each of us needs to do better at knowing our stand, at taking our stand, and at interpreting our stand. This means being accountable to ourselves, to the kids, and to the public -- and perhaps in that order. It also means being a professional in the finest sense of the word. It means, above all, being honest.

The next question in accountability is Accountability "for what" -- For what shall we be accountable? I'd like to suggest that most urgently of all, we be accountable for a program that makes human sense. And to add two other dimensions, we need to be accountable for a program that makes both educationai sense and 1970 sense. Let's look at each one of these aspects of the "for what" question. What does make human sense? What does make educational sense? What does make 1970 sense?

Making Human Sense in Education

First, let's tackle the "accountability for what" question from the human sense standpoint. One of the unique features of a human is his language. In fact, many people would go so far as to say that language is the most significant feature that separates man from the other animals. Language, in its broadest sense, encompasses a person's ability to think in terms of symbolism and to communicate with others in a verbal context. I believe it is fair to say that an individual's language is a real clue to his humanness and his uniqueness as an individual. His own language and his ability to use it make him different from any other human being. That's why educators find themselves far off-base when they set as an ini ial goal the changing and altering of a child's language.

A child's language is to be used - not changed. It is to be tapped for the communicative value it has at the moment, realizing that, in process,the child communication effectiveness will be continually refined.

A child's language is a very personal gift. It enables him to know his experiences, to deal with his experiences, to share his experiences, to reflect on them, and to project from them into the future. It enables a child to think about himself, and, because he can, to have an effect on the shape of the future and what he can become. What does all this have to do with accountability? Just simply the fact that we take it seriously or we don't. We either live every minute with the kids convincing them that their brand of thinking and communicating can be useful for knowing themselves, relating to others, and shaping their ideas for human good -- or we don't. We either want to be held accountable for a child's personal language growth in a human sense or we don't. It's as truthful as that.

A second thing that makes human sense in education is to remember that humans are relating beings. They relate to themselves -- they probe their own thinking. They relate to others collectively. They relate to another individually. They relate to another in terms of the social, emotional, and intellectual context in which they see that individual from time to time. They relate to the environment at large. They relate to problems and concerns as they see them. They

relate to feelings, moods, and emotions. They relate to the unspoken and the non-verbal. They relate to the spirit of the times. They relate to changing tempos. They relate to distant drummers and sources unknown. If teachers and other educators could understand this phenomenon of humanity better, there would undoubtedly be revolutionary changes brought to curriculum efforts.

Relating is the name of the game today, and we either choose to deal in school with children as relating beings or we don't. We either listen and live with children in a way that we know how they are relating or we don't. We either use these relationships as the legitimate content of the child's learning or we don't. We either recognize and surface what is going on in a child's mind and help him make it useful in his life, or we jam his mind with something that doesn't make quite as much human sense to the human we are trying to educate.

Can we deal with children as relating beings? Can we do something more programwise about building on the relationships that emerge from day to day regardless of how they get in our way as teachers, administrators, or systems-at-large? Is this something for which we want to be held accountable?

A third thing that makes human sense in education is to deal with today's realities. This is a time when many things do not make human sense. Problems are overwhelming. We find it impossible and ulcer-producing to deal with complexity. We are unable to see solutions or alternative paths within the myriad of societal cancer spots that permeate the horizon. We

tackle small tasks and leave the larger parts untouched. We are escape artists from reality. Schools are perhaps the leading escapists when it comes to dealing realistically with societal problems with kids of every age. We act as though today's problems of survival and personal management were encroachers on the curriculum, rather than the launching pads for investigation and knowledge organization. We tend to think we are educating children to cope with the life they will lead by ignoring the realities of their lives today. We are prone to believe that we have grade-level material to cover which actually is more important than the content of children's minds at the moment. I'd like to think that each of us could be much more concerned about helping children to start with today, to interpret today in light of the past, to probe, to see new roles to play, to see paths that must be taken, and to see abilities that must be learned because they are personally relevant.

That some people don't eat, that oldsters are unable to get care, that schools are still segregated, that humans are still segregated, that opportunities are unequal, that dualism of life exists, that housing and living conditions are intolerable for many, that smiles are broader in some places than others, that some people get up each morning happy while others arise in fear are societal problems and the harshest of realities. Schools are in a position to deal with societal issues if they are concerned and wish to do so. It makes human

sense. Some educators, however, may choose to ignore the issue. Some educators will choose to be held accountable -- others won't. Some will continue to play games; others will educate.

Humans are concerned individuals. To deal in school with the concerns of children is a fourth idea that makes human sense. Did you ever stop to think about it? Being concerned is a reliable human trait, even for children. Humans are concerned with themselves as physical beings, as thinking beings, as beings to be governed, as beings who need to communicate, as beings who need to survive, as beings who create, and as beings who relate to and desire to understand their surroundings. It makes human sense to deal with these concerns as children may perceive them. Even children are expected to possess a degree of expertise in resolving and coping with their concerns as human beings living in a world with other human beings. If the world is going to hold a child accountable for such a performance, ought we not be much more serious about holding ourselves accountable for giving a child a better chance to understand and deal with his concerns? Time may be running out.

James Michener in his book Hawaii once wrote these words: "For this is the journey that men make: to find themselves. If they fail in this, it doesn't matter much what else they find ... But if a man learns why he lives, if he knows what he can be depended upon to do, the limits of his courage, the position from which he will no longer re-

treat, the secret reservoirs of his determination, the extent of his dedication, the depth of his feelings, his honest and unpostured goals both for himself and others -- then he has found a mansion which he can inhabit with dignity all the days of his life."

He wrote these words for you and for me -- and for every child with whom we come into contact. We are all responsible for creating a program that makes human sense -- one that involves children in relating with others in the most personal and genuine ways. We cannot afford to be a part of a program that does not focus first and foremost on the things that make humans human: a person's language and his ways of using it; an individual's ability to relate personally to people, things, events, and feelings in his life space; an individual's ability to be concerned; and an individual's interest in the problems of his society. To deal with an individual on human terms is an awesome demand. Do you wish to be held accountable? Re-think your responsibility.

Enough about being held accountable for a school program that makes human sense. What about a school program that makes educational sense? The 1970 ASCD Yearbook states: "A school that today exalts careers and affluence when its students seek self-identity and interpersonal understanding is headed for extinction. Only by helping the young develop humane capabilities can schools become relevant to modern youth." Maybe that's a clue for educators -- to develop humane capabilities -- in ourselves and others. That tells

us something about an educationally sensible program. But let's look further. What are some other elements of a school program that make educational sense?

Making Educational Sense in Education

Kids are great at getting involved and doing things. That of course means action, experimenting, and a depth of experiencing -- and a program so characterized makes both human and educational sense. A child will pursue ideas endlessly providing someone listens to him and helps him shape his ideas. Most children have plenty of ideas ready to pursue if we choose to recognize them as individuals with individual thoughts. It's when we fail to recognize individual thoughts and experiences as keystones of personal curricula that we are forced to play the game of motivating and readying students to perform according to pre-planned patterns.

The truth is that every student is ready for much more than we care to deal with or recognize. Every experience the child has or has had is a worthy one -- not just the ones that have been scribed indelibly in the educational journals and curriculum guides. The whole past of a child does not have to be rebuilt before learning can occur. It is experiencing, past and present, which generates a flow of language. From this experiencing flow more and more ideas worth pursuing. And skill perfection <u>is</u> an important aspect of the process that enables the child to develop his ideas more independently.

Questing and the pursuit of ideas, however, come first. The child will build the necessary language power (even reading power) to support his quest, if we as educators will more fully understand our roles as facilitators. The needs of each child will become focused in the process of his participating and following through on his ideas. This whole concept of learning makes educational sense -- it's something we ought to be held more accountable for fostering. It is a concept of education that deserves more support and understanding from boards of education as well as teachers who often feel that language development, including reading, will improve when we "tighten up" the curriculum, get down to business, and eliminate the frills of activity and experiencing.

Another thing that makes educational sense is that a child must "get connected" to those places and those individuals that have something to offer him educationally. Sad as it may seem, a teacher locked in a room with thirty or more kids doesn't have much of a chance of educating. The same can be said of an isolated school. Did you ever think about the effective learning children could accomplish if their programs included more than field-trip time for involvement in factories, with businessmen, with construction workers, with craftsmen, and with work-a-day people on a contract or exchange basis? Education is faced with yeoman work to learn how to get all children involved in the real life and blood

of the world and how to get the myriad of community talent in and out of the school building throughout the day. Serious notions need to be entertained concerning the expanded-school-community movement, 12-month school, and the flexible operation of educational programs. Perhaps this is an entire area about which you wish to have no involvement. The implications for teacher-training institutions, principals, teachers, central-office administrators, boards of education, and community citizens are severe. Holding ourselves accountable for developing a more flexible and "widened" school environment makes educational sense. Whether or not the challenge will be met or quickly mounted is another matter requiring more systematic study and commitment than is evident in the vast majority of school systems whose priorities lie elsewhere.

Still another idea that makes educational sense is to shape goals with the child in the process of his learning and to account to his parents for the progress that he is making toward these goals. Such a process makes more educational sense than laying out ahead of time all the goals for every grade until the child is graced with a diploma which permits his respectable entry into the next layer of education. Education is a here and now matter. It is a continuous, non-graded, multi-aged affair with an unpredictable agenda. None of us can know what a child needs to learn until we have talked and worked with him and observed him in operation day by day. Goals are most appropriately set when the child comes to the realization that some learning dimension makes sense to him

and when he has some commitment toward its attainment. Goals that are set in this way are perhaps the only ones worth pursuing. The implications of this process of goal setting for accountability are clear. You can't state ahead of time what types of learning will transpire, or you can't predict ahead of time what levels of attainment will be reached. Again the question must be raised -- Can schools be organized and manned by humans who understand this sort of human and educational facilitation? Or perhaps an even more fundamental question is, Will educators assume this kind of responsibility concerning goal setting and the development of personalized learning agendas?

Self-choice, self-commitment, self-expression, self-awareness, and self-pursuit also make educational sense. They make sense as priorities in curriculum, but they play havoc with educators who focus their programs on skill attainment first, last, and always. I can remember a first-grade teacher who claimed that she didn't have time for any of "that other stuff" because she could never teach her kids to read without conducting reading groups every morning and holding re-runs every afternoon. In the same school the upper-grade teachers complained that the lower-grade teachers didn't spend enough time teaching reading. At the same time, the upper-grade teachers refused to help the kids with fundamental abilities because they had "too much to cover." How can a school like that make human or educational sense? And why didn't we have enough common sense to talk together about the whole dilemma? It seems necessary in any educational endeavor to tie

up continuously to the fundamental concepts of self-awareness, self-pursuit, and self-expression as bedrock elements of learning which keep the child so involved in exploring, in using language, in communicating, and in pursuing ideas that maximum opportunity for learning is present at every juncture of the road. It is a kind of freedom to learn. Of course, to be truthful about it, I know several educators who believe that children will intrinsically make the wrong choices and that children will never meet up with all the essential experiences that we as adults believe they must have. Such individuals do not want to be held accountable for a program that features principles of self-emergence. Would you? It's something to think about. There are many who feel that the biggest changes in education must come in the role of the teacher as a facilitor of personal types of learning.

It all adds up to a program of educational sense: active, involved, questing children; an expanded educational environment encompassing the entire community; emergent and individualized goal setting; and a curriculum focused on self-development. What are you doing about these things?

Making 1970 Sense in Education

And finally there is that third dimension of the "accountability for what" question -- a program that makes 1970 sense. We have already talked about the "nowness" of education and the need to deal with societal and human

problems. I'm thinking of other attributes of a 1970 educational program. I don't believe you or I have the least notion of what a 1970 education ought to look like. And that is perhaps the best reason for letting loose of many of the things we have done and continue to do so that we may have a better chance of following the leads of the kids. Whether we like it or not, they are the ones of the current generation who have the best clues as to what they need to learn. They perhaps have the greatest insight into the demands being placed on their existence. They, too, hold the most valid clues to the reaction patterns of youth, and we cannot any longer afford to bury the emotional sides of children in school as skillfully as we have in the past. What does make 1970 sense in an educational program?

1970 is certainly characterized by media pulsating on the senses from every direction. And the intriguing part of it all is that the largest proportion of communication deals with the spoken word and the auditory and visual senses -- and by visual I don't mean reading. I'm talking about the impact of space, color, dimension, juxtaposition, arrangement, television and so forth on the eyes (and the ears) of the beholder. It's interesting, too, that studies report that an individual spends about three-fourths of his language and communication time talking and listening and only the remainder in reading and writing. How does your program in school stack up to those figures? If the statistics about schools are correct, schools continue to be overwhelmingly oriented to reading and writing with little emphasis, especially

for the "low-achieving" students, whoever they are, on verbal interaction, thinking, non-verbal communication and the like. Come to think of it, the public today may be forcing us to account for success in areas that don't make complete 1970 sense. A language and communication program for 1970 ought to be dealing more with spoken and listening abilities as well as with the media of communication and the auditory and visual impact the media are making on humans. McLuhan talks a great deal, and convincingly, too, about the medium being the message. As educators, are we doing enough to help the kids understand and cope with the media? Do we as educators understand the message behind a book such as Damn Reading, which is currently being read and discussed by many students as well as teachers? Are we doing anything about the implications? Will we be responsible for a language and communication program that makes 1970 sense -- one that focuses realistically on the medium and the message?

Another idea that makes 1970 sense is that we help kids of every age sort the stimuli that engulf their lives. Educators need to be counted as humans who have helped kids categorize and catalog the variables in their lives, who have shown kids how to deal with complexity as best humans can. Educators need to be more adept at helping children store and retrieve data. What would an educational program look like in your room, in your school, if you focused continually and conscientiously on helping individuals, yourself included, understand how to exist as humans in a complicated and technologized society? Do you wish to be held accountable?

Closely allied to the complexity issue is the issue of helping individuals to see hope, possibility, and value in a life space that has no hope, no possibility, and little apparent value. Ask yourself quietly right now if you as an educator give this 1970 need much living space in your classroom, building, or school system. Do children in your school act like life is worth their eager involvement? Is there sufficient emphasis on determining alternatives of possibility in any situation?

In a world where most of us give up on more than we follow through on, is there sufficient room in your educational emphasis to focus on a human's capability to sort through the barrage of inhuman and personally-stifling parts of life in order to see possibility for human involvement and personal accomplishment? Is there time for supporting a child's ideas and for helping him deal with and resolve those ideas lest they go unattended? Do you really live up to the hopes and dreams that children want from school and from a day-by-day life with you? These are facets of education that make 1970 sense and that demand a more responsible stance on the part of educators. Again, do you wish to hold yourself accountable?

Conclusion

Being accountable to yourself, to the kids, and to the public is a big order. Being accountable for a program that

makes human sense, that makes educational sense, and that makes 1970 sense is an even bigger order. There are no shortcuts or easy answers. We must be more consistent in appraising programs in these terms. We owe it to ourselves, however, and to the children and their parents, to work on the issues that are involved. The effort is sure to pay rich dividends. It will help us -- even force us -- to re-think our responsibility to children, and that's the most important task confronting educators today. We're presently encumbered with too much heavy baggage from the past -- our own ideas, the ideas of the public, the outmoded, the unnecessary, the unwanted -- to accomplish the important work of today. Let's get busy re-thinking our responsibility to children, and let's stand up and communicate about those principles for which we will be held accountable, and let's act accordingly. We must do better at making educational decisions according to what makes educational, human, and 1970 sense.

It has been said that because of the Vietnam war, the black-white situation, the crisis in the cities, most students cannot escape some sort of emotional confusion or intellectual reckoning with at least one of these issues. Continuing to teach subject matter, with its typical disregard of the student's deepest concerns, is educational suicide. (Thomas D. Klein, English Journal, February, 1970)

It has also been said that the new education must be less concerned with sophistication than compassion. It must teach man the most difficult lesson of all -- to look at

someone anywhere in the world and be able to see the image of himself. (Norman Cousins)

We all need to re-think.

Where does reading fit into all of this?

Where do you?

Postlogue

The ideas featured in this discussion are not sources for agreement or disagreement, but rather for reflection.